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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Jianhua Fan  
5800 Maudina Ave.  
#C2  
Nashville, TN 37209

EXAMINER

GELLNER, JEFFREY L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3643

DATE MAILED: 08/31/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/578,437

Applicant(s)

FAN, JIANHUA

Examiner

Jeffrey L. Gellner

Art Unit

3643

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 June 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 27, 29, 44, 45 and 47-56 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 27, 29, 44, 45 and 47-56 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Specification*

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: The “strip” of claim 1, line 4 and claim 50, lines 1 and 2, lacks antecedent basis in the Specification. That is, somewhere in the Specification the term “strip” should be used.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. §102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 29, 47, 50, 53, 55, and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wilson et al. (GB 2198324 A).

As to Claim 1, Wilson et al. discloses a self watering tray (Figs. 1-5) for a plant pot (defined as 1 of Fig. 1) comprising a tray (3 as disclosed in Fig. 1; page 4 lines 5-8), the tray having side walls (“side wall” of Fig. 1) and a bottom wall (“bottom wall” of Fig. 1), the tray holding fluid (inherent in “water reservoir” of abstract; shown in Fig. 1; Fig. 4); and, at least one strip (7 of Fig. 2) extending upwardly (shown in Figs. 1-4) from the bottom wall for supporting a plant pot (1 of Figs. 3 and 4), each of the at least one strip separate (shown in Fig. 2) from each

Art Unit: 3643

other (shown in Fig. 2), the at least one strip making enough space for reserving fluid in the tray (shown in Fig. 1).

As to Claim 29, Wilson et al. further disclose a fluid intake lip ("lip" of Fig. 1), the fluid intake lip disposed on the side walls of the tray (see Fig. 1), so that fluid can easily be added into the tray through the fluid intake lip.

As to Claim 50, Wilson et al. further disclose the at least one strip having a second section (8 of Figs. 1 and 2) the second section extending upward from the strip (7 of Figs. 1 and 2).

As to Claim 47, Wilson et al. further disclose a wick (9 of Fig. 1), the wick provides a fluid conduit capable of sucking fluid from the tray ("moisture absorbing" of abstract).

As to Claim 53, Wilson et al. disclose a self watering tray (Figs. 1-5) for a plant pot (defined as 1 of Fig. 1) comprising a tray (3 as disclosed in Fig. 1; page 4 lines 5-8), the tray having side walls ("side wall" of Fig. 1) and a bottom wall ("bottom wall" of Fig. 1), the tray holding fluid (inherent in "water reservoir" of abstract; shown in Fig. 1; Fig. 4); and, at least one leg (for example, 7 and 8 of Fig. 2), the at least one leg having at least three wings (wings shown in Fig. 2 in that each leg has two wings that extend away from the wick and one wing which extends to and attaches to another leg) formed into a "+" shape (in that in Fig. 2 the elements 7 have a "+" shape at there four corners) and the at least three wings extending outwardly from the central part (Shown in Fig. 2), the at least three legs coupled to the tray for supporting a plant pot.

As to Claim 55, Wilson et al. further disclose the at least one three wing leg extends upwardly from the bottom wall of the tray (see Figs. 1 and 2).

As to Claim 56, Wilson et al. further disclose an up section (8 of Figs. 1 and 3) extending upwardly from the three wing leg.

Claims 1, 47, and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Lucas et al. (FR 2719974 A1).

As to Claim 1, Lucas et al. discloses a self watering tray (Figs. 3, 5, and 6) for a plant pot (not shown but inherent in Fig. 6) comprising a tray (2 of Fig. 6), the tray having side walls (region around leadline of 2 of Fig. 6) and a bottom wall (region around leadline of 4 of Fig. 6), the tray holding fluid (shown in Fig. 6); and, at least one strip (14 of Figs. 3 and 6) extending upwardly (Fig. 3) from the bottom wall for supporting the plant pot, each of the at least one strip separate from each other (14 of Fig. 3), the at least one strip making enough space for reserving fluid in the tray (shown in Fig. 6).

As to Claim 47, Lucas et al. further discloses a wick (11 of Figs. 3, 5, and 6), the wick providing a conduit capable of sucking fluid from the tray (shown in Fig. 6).

As to Claim 48, Lucas et al. further discloses a tube (13 of Figs. 3 and 6), the wick inserted into the tube (shown in Figs. 3 and 6).

Claims 27, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Rajon (FR 1544194) (document N of Examiner's 892 of office action paper no. 3).

Art Unit: 3643

As to Claim 27, Rajon discloses a self watering tray (Figs. 1-3) for a plant pot (G of Fig. 3) comprising a tray (A of Figs. 2 and 3), the tray having side walls (shown in of Figs. 2 and 3) and a bottom wall (region around leadline of A in Fig. 2), the tray holding fluid (shown in Fig. 3); and, at least one leg (C,D, and F of Fig. 1) coupled to the tray (shown in Fig. 3), the at least one leg having two sections , an up section (D of Figs. 1 and 3) and a low section (F and sidewall of region C of Fig. 1), the up section is smaller than the low section (shown in Figs. 1 and 3), low section having a closed side wall (the side wall, region of sidewall of element C), and it is hollow (region inside sidewall of C does not extend completely across diameter of C so the region is hollow), the up section formed upwardly from the low section (Fig. 1). a shoulder (region between D and extending out to C of Figs. 1 and 3) between the up section and low section supporting the plant pot (shown in Fig. 3).

As to Claim 44, Rajon further discloses the up section hollow (D of Fig. 1), the at least one leg filled with a fluid sucking material (E of Figs. 1 and 3) which provides a fluid conduit capable of sucking fluid from the tray (shown in Fig. 3).

Claims 27, 45, and 52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Travers (FR 2637156).

As to Claim 27, Travers discloses a self watering tray (Figs. 1-6c) for a plant pot (12 of Fig. 1) comprising a tray (20 of Fig. 1), the tray having side walls (Fig. 1) and a bottom wall (Fig. 1), the tray holding fluid (Fig. 1); and, at least one leg (18 of Figs. 1 and 2) coupled to the tray (shown in Fig. 1), the at least one leg having two sections , an up section (26 of Figs. 2 and 4c) and a low section (22 of Figs. 2 and 4c), the up section is smaller than the low section (shown

Art Unit: 3643

in Figs. 2 and 4c), each of them having a closed side wall (Figs. 2 and 4c in that they do not have apertures on their sidewalls) and a top wall (22 of Fig. 2), and it is hollow (in that region between 22 and 24 is considered hollow), the up section extending upwardly from the center of the top wall of the low section, a shoulder (region where leadline of 22 touches leg 18 in Figs. 2 and 4c) between the up section and low section supporting the plant pot (shown in Fig. 1).

As to Claim 45, Travers further discloses a wick (28 of Figs. 3 and 4c) accompanying the leg (shown in Figs. 4a and 4b) while the up section is not hollow (26 of Fig. 3)

As to Claim 52, Travers further discloses a pad (28a of Fig. 4a) under the leg for standing more stable on the tray bottom.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 49 and 51 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Travers (FR 2637156) in view of Shirohata (JP7-313003).

As to Claim 49, the limitations of Claim 27 are disclosed as described above. Not disclosed is an intake lip on the side walls of the tray. Shirohata, however, discloses a lip (region at end of the tray's sidewall as shown in Fig. 6) on the sidewall of the tray. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the tray of Travers by adding a lip disclosed by Shirohata so as to provide to consumer tastes.

Art Unit: 3643

As to Claim 51, the limitations of Claim 29 are disclosed as described above. Travers further discloses a bottom wall (region around where leadline of 24 ends in Fig. 4a) on the lower section. Not disclosed is the bottom wall with a hole for fluid communications. Shirohata, however, discloses a bottom wall with a hole (shown in Fig. 1 in element 11). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the tray of Travers by adding a hole in the bottom wall as disclosed by Shirohata so as to provide area for the wick.

Claim 54 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson et al. (GB 2198324 A) in view of Travers (FR 2637156).

As to Claim 54, the limitations of Claim 53 are disclosed as described above. Not disclosed is a pad under the at least three wing leg. Travers, however, a pad under a leg (28b of Fig. 4a). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the tray of Wilson et al. by adding a pad under the leg as disclosed by Travers so as to ensure the wick stay in place.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed 21 June 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments are: (1) Wilson does not disclose or suggest as least one strip that are separate from each other (1<sup>st</sup> page of Remarks at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph); (2) Wilson does not disclose s strip in the form of "+" (2<sup>nd</sup> page of Remarks at 1<sup>st</sup> complete paragraph); (3) In Lucas the Examiner should disclose the structure that the Examiner considers to be the "bottom



Art Unit: 3643

wall” (2<sup>nd</sup> page of Remarks at bottom half of page); (4) Rajon does not disclose a hollow low section (3<sup>rd</sup> page of Remarks at 1<sup>st</sup> complete paragraph); and, (5) Travers does not disclose a leg with a low section that is hollow (3<sup>rd</sup> page of Remarks at 3<sup>rd</sup> complete para.).

As to argument (1), Examiner considers Wilson’s element 7 to be a strip. Figure 2 of Wilson clearly shows at least one strip (Examiner considers Wilson’s Fig. 2 to disclose 3 strips. Whether one strip could support Wilson’s growbag or punch through the film of the growbag is not germane to the disclosure of Wilson. Examiner considers the disclosure of Wilson to be enabled and to disclose Applicant’s claim language.

As to argument (2), Fig. 2 of Wilson discloses three legs that have shapes of a “+” in that each leg is made of four shapes that are “+”.

As to argument (3), Examiner considers element (4) of Fig. 6 to be the bottom wall.

As to argument (4), Examiner considers the low section of Rajon’s leg to be hollow because in Fig. 1 the region inside sidewall of C does not extend completely across diameter of C so the region is hollow

As to argument (5), Examiner considers the low section of Rajon’s leg to be hollow because in Fig. 2 the region between 22 and 24 is hollow.

### ***Conclusion***

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

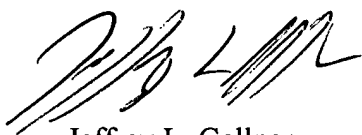
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

Art Unit: 3643

the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey L. Gellner whose telephone number is 571.272.6887. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:00, alternate Fridays off, if attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Poon can be reached on 571.272.6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571.273.8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jeffrey L. Gellner  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3643